

NEW PUBLICATIONS

RECOLLECTIONS OF A PRIVATE SOLDIER IN THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC. By Frank WILKESON. 16mo, pp. 24. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

The author of this book, who enlisted in a New York regiment before he was sixteen years old, and served through the Wilderness and Petersburg campaigns, tells an interesting story and presents some of the aspects of life in the ranks with frankness and force. He seems, however, to be an over-confident and critical person, of slight discretion, who had a poor opinion of his officers, especially those who had enjoyed military education, and who never doubted his ability to judge better of a battle or a campaign than any of the commanding generals. He declares that he came out of the army with "not only the feeling but the knowledge . . . that the military salvation of the country requires that the West Point Academy be destroyed." His own narrative, however, shows the absurdity of such criticisms by a raw farmer's boy, who even if his judgment had been mature, was never in a position to know what went on except in his immediate neighborhood, but caught up all the flying rumors of the camps with eager credulity. Unfortunately, too, he gives the private soldier as bad a character as the commissioned officers. He enlisted late, when the first fervor of volunteering was over, and a great many hounds of a bad class were pushed to the front; but making all proper allowances for this element it must nevertheless be said that the impression left by his account of his comrades' is surprisingly unfavorable, much more so than he probably suspects. If the commanders were incompetent and the ranks were filled with potholes and thieves, we should like to know who won the victories.

"The Sentimental Calendar" (Charles Scribner's Sons) is the title of a collection of short stories by "J. S. of Dale," some of them reprinted from the magazines, others new. Several of them are well conceived, even strongly conceived, but the execution is not equal to the idea, and the volume as a whole gives us the impression that this clever tale-teller is working too loosely to do himself justice. — A translation of Hoffman's "The Seerapen Brethren" by Major Alexander Ewing, the first volume of which has just appeared in Bohm's Standard Library (Scribner & Welford), is a welcome attempt to give English readers a more adequate knowledge of a master of fiction whose strange genius has as yet been very imperfectly represented in our language. The work in question consists of a number of short tales supposed to have been recited at the club from which the collection takes its name. Some of them will be recognized as old favorites, long known out of their proper place. The translation is spirited and readable. — "The Master of Tanagra" (London: H. Greville & Co., New-York: B. Westermann & Co.), is a story of ancient Greece by Ernst von Wildenbruch, translated fairly by the Baroness von Lauer. It introduces Praxiteles and Phryne, and the school of the famous sculptor at Athens, together with Myrtilos, the pupil of Praxiteles, whose delicate little figures gave fame to Tanagra. The archaeological details are managed without pedantry, and a pretty and animating love story holds the reader's sympathy. — The new edition of George Meredith's novels now includes "Viktoria" (Roberts Brothers), which is a sequel to "Sandra Bellini," and a tale of Italian conspiracy and patriotism.

REFUSE WATER OF CHEMICAL WORKS. An investigation has been made, under Government direction, of the pollution of the River Clyde by the discharge of offensive refuse from 140 works into the public sewers. The report states that the most obnoxious of all these sources of pollution is "potash." By the passage of this liquid through the sewers, the sewage was so much contaminated that it contained sixty-six grains per gallon of free nitric acid, with the effect that the sewage, besides being rendered acid, was enormously increased in strength as regards nitrogenous organic matter, and that, instead of one of lime per gallon, was found sufficient for precipitation, from forty-three hundred weight to two tons were required. The objection to the refuse in the city sewers are as follows: It is highly injurious to all sorts of morts and plants, and causes the water to escape into the soil; the acid and upon the s-wade setting free sulphuric hydrogen; the susceptibility of the deposit of the putrefied material to decomposition, and the liability of the sedimentary matter to settle down in sewers, in the river or in the harbor where it would continue to rot and throw up noxious gases.

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